

Amendment would protect us from gay marriages

By MARK HILLMAN

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For those who laughed at the prediction that runaway judges would someday impose gay marriage by judicial fiat, the time has come to eat crow.

Thanks to the self-aggrandizing Massachusetts Supreme Court, that state will soon obliterate the line between natural marriage and the enlightened definition which makes marriage nothing more than a domestic contract between consenting adults.

Coloradans should care because the U.S. Constitution requires that "full faith and credit shall be given in each state to the public acts, records and judicial proceedings of every other state." A marriage performed in Massachusetts is valid in all 50 states.

The democratic foundation of our republic is mere inconvenience to these robed dictators who hold their own morality in such high esteem that the opinions of the masses are irrelevant.

Not only is this yet another stellar illustration of judicial activism, it gives lie to the notion that imposing morality is the sole domain of the political right.

Contrary to assertions by the screaming left, most conservatives don't care what goes on in their neighbor's bedroom — although most weddings take place in public courtrooms and churches, not in bedrooms.

In fact, legislation addressing same-sex relationships and sexual orientation has come exclusively from the political left in the past two sessions of the Colorado General Assembly. The lone entry from the right is this year's resolution urging Congress to pass the Federal Marriage Amendment.

However, courts stir the pot by ordering legislatures to adopt gay marriage or civil union laws in Hawaii, Vermont and Massachusetts. The U.S. Supreme Court incredibly declared last summer that the U.S. Constitution contained a guarantee of the right to homosexual sodomy, a right unnoticed for more than two centuries by earlier justices.

It is clear from *Lawrence v. Texas* that a majority of the U.S. Supreme Court is poised to declare gay marriage to be an unwritten fundamental right at its next opportunity. In *Lawrence*, the court's majority agreed "that our laws and tradition afford constitutional protection to personal decisions relating to marriage, procreation, contraception, family relationships, child rearing and education."

Justice Anthony Kennedy added, "Persons in a homosexual relationship may seek autonomy for these purposes just as heterosexual persons do."

Although Kennedy later opined that *Lawrence* did not "involve whether the government must give formal recognition to any relationship that homosexual persons seek to enter," his 18-page opinion laid the groundwork for gay rights advocates to argue that homosexual marriage meets the same criteria the court used to declare a fundamental right to gay sex.

America faces a choice: amend the U.S. Constitution to define marriage in its natural context or do nothing and let the courts interpret homosexual marriage into the Constitution. If the former doesn't occur, the latter most certainly will.

Rep. Marilyn Musgrave, R-Fort Morgan, is clearly in the right place at the right time.

After leading the fight to preserve the natural definition of marriage in Colorado, she was elected to Congress just prior to *Lawrence v. Texas*. The Federal Marriage Amendment, which she and Sen. Wayne Allard sponsor, states:

"Marriage in the United States shall consist only of the union of a man and a woman. Neither this Constitution or the constitution of any state, nor state or federal law, shall be construed to require that marital status or the legal incidents thereof be conferred upon unmarried couples or groups."

Ratification is not a longshot if Congress will bring the amendment to a vote. Already, 38 states — including California — have passed laws to preserve the natural definition of marriage. Threatened with the prospect of five justices taking away our right to define marriage, citizens may prefer to draw the line themselves.

By TOM PHILPOTT

Career counselors advise against it. Financial experts say it's a poor deal. Economists estimate a typical enlisted member with 20 years of service will cut the lifetime value of retirement by \$309,000.

Yet about half of military careerists, as they enter their 15th year of service, have been drawn to a \$30,000 cash bonus and voluntarily trade away a far more valuable slice of future retirement benefits.

They do so by electing to shift retirement plans, from "High-3" to the less-generous "Redux" formula with its side offer of instant cash.

If a business scammed military people this way, Congress would hold hearings and force executives to end their sting operation. It was Congress, however, that designed this scheme. Considering the goal — to save billions of dollars that otherwise would go to a new generation of retirees — the scheme is brilliant.

Most pay experts can't say enough bad things about Redux and the Career Status Bonus (CSB). Military leaders are more constrained. After all, the honey trap is legal. Also, for many careerists, the typical \$22,000 (after taxes) is so timely for buying a home or paying off crushing debt that it just feels right. Often, there are better alternatives, however.

Congress devised CSB, ironi-

cally, while doing a great favor for the same service members it entices, those who enter after July 31, 1986. These members got stuck under Redux, cheaper retirement plans passed during the Reagan administration. By 1999, fearing lesser benefits would cause retention and morale problems, Congress moved these members, and future entrants, under High-3, a far more generous plan.

For a 20-year career, High-3 pays an annuity equal to 40 percent of average basic pay during the member's three highest-earning years. Redux pays only 40 percent of the three-year average after 20 years' service.

High-3 protects annuities with annual cost-of-living adjustments (COLAs) that match inflation. Redux COLAs are 1 percent below inflation with a one-time catch-up in at age 62, but then COLAs resume.

Worried about the cost of shifting future retirees to High-3, Congress borrowed an incentive idea used successfully in the post-Cold War drawdown. It would offer former Redux careerists, in their 15th year of service, a cash bonus payable immediately to shift back to Redux.

The first group eligible to make the choice entered the

THE WEST

American gets jail for aiding Taliban

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

SEATTLE • A Seattle-raised Muslim convert was sentenced Friday to two years in prison for aiding the Taliban.

James Ujaama, 38, pleaded guilty last year, admitting he delivered computer equipment and a recruit to Taliban officials in Afghanistan. Having served time behind bars, he could be free this summer.

"In the future, I will act more responsibly and make the right choices," Ujaama told U.S. District Judge Barbara Rothstein.

Ujaama was born James Earnest Thompson in Denver but moved to Seattle with his family as a boy.

As a young man, he and his brother, Jon, were credited with working to rid their Central Area neighborhood of drugs and crime.

Ujaama was arrested in 2002 after an investigation of a Seattle mosque and was indicted on charges he con-

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